CHRONICLE AND COMMENT

By ARTHUR BARTLETT MAURICE.

THERE are many phases and aspects to Beranger's "Qu'on est bien a vingt ans," which Thackeray happily adapted to "the brave days when we were twenty-one." It is not a matter of being in any particular year. It implies a period of life, rather earlier than twenty or one and twenty, when the blood of youth runs riot through the veins. What are the literary ardors of that period? What are the books to be read then or never to be read? Two such books were Ik Marvel's "Reveries of a Bachelor" and its successor, "Dream Life." The past tense is used deliberately. Does youth to-day — American youth, of course—read those books and thrill over them as youth did in the "Golden Nineties," and as youth before that had thrilled back to the year 1850 or 1851? Or has it become too sophisticated for hearth visions, preferring the realism dealing with the "flapper" and the "petting party?"

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"THE Life of Donald G. Mitchell" (Ik Marvel), by Waldo H. Dunn, has just been issued from the press of Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons. It was less than sixteen years ago that Donald G. Mitchell died—in August, 1908—yet his personal recollection went back to what we are inclined to think of as the very roots of American literary history. With his own eyes he saw almost the whole of the development of American literature in its greatest period. As Mr. Dunn points out, he was contemporary, friend and successor of Washington Irving. He was a member of the committee appointed to provide a permanent memorial to James Fenimore Cooper, and helped to arrange a public meeting in the old Metropolitan Hall, New York city, over which Daniel Webster presided and before which William Cullen Bryant delivered a eulogy on Cooper.

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BEFORE Oliver Wendell Holmes had won fame as the Autocrat of the Breakfast Table, Mr. Mitchell had attained even international prominence. When he published his first book in 1847 Longfellow's "Hiawatha" was as yet unthought of and Lowell's "Biglow Papers" were running in the columns of the Boston *Courier*. When "Reveries of a Bachelor" was published in 1850 Nathaniel Hawthorne had just completed his term of office in the Salem Custom House and had ready for publication "The Scarlet Letter." During the decade from 1837 to 1847 Emerson had published two volumes of essays and one of poems, and was about to issue "Representative Men." Poe had risen to prominence and was nearing the end of his unhappy life.

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AMERICAN copyright laws were not what they should have been in the last century. The existing laxity was responsible for more than fifty unauthorized editions of Donald G. Mitchell's books. His authorized publishers, according to Mr. Dunn, have sold more than a million copies of his books. There can be little doubt that the sales of the unauthorized editions have far exceeded that. To the world in general Mr. Mitchell, or, rather, Ik Marvel, is known by the two little volumes which first brought him into prominence—"Reveries of a Bachelor" and "Dream Life." Yet these books represent only a small portion of his literary work. Moreover, literary work was only one side of his life. He thought of himself first and foremost as a farmer and landscape gardener and valued most his agricultural and rural writings.

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"REVERIES of a Bachelor" was published in December, 1850. Donald G. Mitchell was then 28 years of age. The book was a success from the beginning, and the elated author, realizing that he had come into his own, determined to follow up the "Reveries" with another book of similar character. That was "Dream Life." In the middle of the last century American readers took their favorite authors more personally than they do in this swiftly moving age. "Reveries of a Bachelor" and "Dream Life" were just the kind of books to provoke letters to the author. Nor was Donald G. Mitchell's correspondence limited to writers of his own land. Not only from far distant States and Territories of the Union but from "the isles of the ocean," from Norway and Sweden, from France and Italy and Germany the mails brought to Ik Marvel striking testimony that he had touched the common heart of humanity.

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IN the "Second Reverie" there is allusion to the author's "packet of letters." That "packet of letters" grew and kept growing till the end of Donald G. Mitchell's life. In his youth and long after there was a humorous aspect to much of this correspondence. To quote Mr. Dunn: "Languishing Adas, and Claras, and Carries, and Jennies, and Dorothys, and Mary 'darlings' showered him with valentines. Other and more ardent maidens wrote to inquire whether the author really was a bachelor; and, with the assurance that their hearts alone could understand and comfort that of Ik Marvel, coyly offered themselves in marriage. Much verse was dedicated to him. Young people wrote for advice and sympathy in their own love affairs. The old wrote to testify that age and experience confirmed the words of his pen. One young French musician dedicated a polka to Ik Marvel."

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ONE of the prettiest of all the love stories of literary men is that of Washington Irving. Matilda Hoffman died, and Irving remained a bachelor to the end of his days, content in his later years to make a home at Sunnyside for his many and somewhat exacting nieces. In the love story of Donald G. Mitchell Washington played the part of a kind of chaperon. Mitchell, at 30 years of age, became restless to revisit Europe. While in New York arranging for his passage he learned that Washington Irving was at Saratoga Springs, and he determined to spend a few days with him before sailing. At Saratoga the famous young bachelor author shared the morning walks of the more famous old bachelor author. There he met Mary Frances Pringle, the daughter of a rice planter of Charleston, S. C. Perhaps it was her unwillingness to be impressed by his youthful fame that first attracted him. Scarcely had Mary Pringle arrived when a friend rushed to her. "Ik Marvel is here. Don't you want to meet him?" But Miss Pringle was not impressed. "No," she said, "I don't want to meet him. If he wants to meet me, very well."

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LITERARY men and literary women pass before the reader in Edmund Gosse's "Aspects and Impressions," also from the Scribner press. In his first chapter Mr. Gosse recalls a strange pair in a victoria he often met in the course of his walks from the northwest of London toward Whitehall in and after 1876. The man, prematurely aging, was hirsute, rugged, satyrlike. That was George Henry Lewis. The woman, "a large, thickset sybil, whose massive features, dreamy and immobile, somewhat grim when seen in profile, were incongruously bordered by a hat, always in the height of the Paris fashion, which in those days commonly included an immense ostrich feather." That was George Eliot. The contrast between the solemnity of the face and the frivolity of the headgear had something pathetic and provincial about it.

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THE death of George Eliot, according to Mr. Gosse, caused a great sensation, for during the ten years after the death of Dickens she had been the dominating figure of English fiction. Her fame was stimulated by the absence of serious rivalry at the time. Had the Brontes lived, or Mrs. Gaskell, it might have been different. But they had died before Dickens. Also Thackeray. Charles Kingsley, whose "Westward Ho!" had just preceded her first appearance, had turned into other and less congenial paths. Charles Reade, whose "It Is Never Too Late to Mend" had been her harbinger, was scarcely regarded as a rival, nor was Anthony Trollope, excellent craftsman as he was. Hence George Eliot was held to be in a class by herself at at the top.

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IT was not until the great war that Henry James became a British subject. But according to Edmund Gosse his full expatriation from the land of his birth dated back many years. In August, 1883, when James returned to London, he had broken all the ties that held him to residence in America. Thus he became a homeless man in a peculiar sense, for while he was regarded as a foreigner in England he seemed to have lost citizenship in the United States. Even his books, though numerous and greatly admired, were tacitly ignored alike in summaries of English and of American current literature. Col. Higginson, in reply to some one who said that Henry James was a cosmopolitan, remarked: "Hardly, for a cosmopolitan is at home even in his own country."

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THE Henry James of later years, as Edmund Gosse saw him grew less and less Anglo-Saxon in appearance and more Latin. "Sometimes there could be noted a theatrical look which struck the eye, as though he might be some retired *jeune premier* of the Francais, *jeune* no longer." Perhaps that was the subtle influence of his French literary enthusiasms of younger days. He owed much of his art to his Paris friendships of the seventies. From French associates of that period he derived practical help in his profession. He was warmly attracted to Gustave Flaubert, to whom he was introduced by Turgenev. From Flaubert he passed to Guy de Maupassant, then an athlete of 24. In the train of Edmond de Goncourt came Zola, whose "L'Assommoir" had just been stopped in serial publication, and Daudet, who had then just published "Jack," and Francois Coppee, whom Mr. Gosse calls "the almost exact coeval of Henry James." The young American, with no apparent claim to attention save the laborious perfection of his French speech, was received on terms of intimacy in this the most exclusive of European intellectual circles.

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HENRY JAMES was at Rye when the war broke out. The nightmare of it, the "huge horror of blackness," stirred him out of his languor and melancholy. Says Mr. Gosse: "At Lamb House he sat through that gorgeous tawny September, listening to the German guns thundering just across the Channel, while the advance of the enemy through those beautiful lands which he knew and loved so well filled him with anguish. He used to sally forth and stand on the bastions of his little town, gazing over the dim marsh that becomes sand-dunes and then sea and then a mirage of the white cliffs of French Flanders that were actually visible when the atmosphere grew transparent. The anguish of his execration became almost the howl of some animal, of a lion of the forest with the arrow in his flank, when the Germans wrecked Rheims Cathedral. He gazed and gazed over the sea southeast, and fancied that he saw the flicker of the flames."

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THE story of Pauli, an amazing story of heartless humbug, is recalled by Mr. Gosse in his chapter on Samuel Butler, the author of "Erehwon" and "The Way of All Flesh." From 1859 to 1864 Butler tried sheep farming in New Zealand. Just before he left there to return to England there came to him a man named Charles Pauli, who had no claim upon him, but who asked him to pay for his passage back to England and to advance him £200 a year for three years. In complying, Butler took upon his shoulders a veritable Old Man of the Sea. In London the two settled together in rooms in Clifford's Inn. Butler lived there for the rest of his life—thirty-eight years—but presently Pauli went elsewhere. He refused to let Butler know his address, yet continually sponged upon him. He said that he could get no help from his own parents and that Butler stood between him and starvation. For three years he made no attempt to work. Called to the Bar in 1867, he lunched with Butler three times a week, but always said that he was earning nothing.

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THIRTY years later, in 1897, after having shared his poverty with this strange friend for thirty-three years, Butler read in the *Times* that Pauli was dead. Making inquiries, he learned that for a great many years past Pauli's income from the law had exceeded £700 a year, and for nearly twenty years had been over £1,000. Pauli left £9,000, not a penny of it to Butler, whose parasite he had been for the greater part of his life, when every £5 note was of great consequence to Butler. The Pauli episode, thinks Mr. Gosse, is valuable in supplying light on certain defects in Butler's intellectual composition. "He was the opposite of those who see life steadily and see it whole. He had no wide horizons, but he investigated a corner or a section of a subject with a burning glass which left all other parts of the surface in darkness. There were Paulis on his mental vision."

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HENRY JAMES from another point of view is to be seen in A. R. Orage's "Readers and Writers," recently published by Alfred A. Knopf. Mr. Orage feels that James was always after sensing ghosts. "His habitat has been said to be the interspace between the real and the ideal; but it can more accurately be defined as the interspace between the dead and the living. You see his vision—almost his clairvoyance—actively engaged in this recovery of his experiences years before as a young man in London. See how he reveled in them, rolling them off his tongue in long circling phrases. Is it not obvious that he is most at home in recollection, in the world of memory, in the interworld once more, of the dead and the living? . . . It is plain that memory differs for him from present vision only in being a little more vivid, a little more real. In order to see a thing clearly, he had, in fact, to make a memory of it, and the present tense of memory is impression."

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WITH all that has been written about Sir Conan Doyle, no one seems to have recalled his activities in 1907, when he applied the Sherlock Holmes methods to an English criminal case and succeeded in bringing about the release of an apparently innocent man. That was the Edjali affair, which was widely exploited in the English newspapers at the time. Edjali, the son of a Parsee and an Englishwoman, was accused of wantonly maiming animals. The prosecution made out a strong case against him. It was alleged that on a certain dark night he went to a field near his home and there brutally mutilated a horse. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle became convinced of his innocence, and succeeded in proving beyond question that the near-sightedness of the prisoner was of so extreme a nature that he would have been unable to find the field let alone the horse.

Authors' Works And Their Ways

A new Margaret Deland novel, "The Vehement Flame," will be published early in June by Harper & Brothers, who compare it favorably with "The Iron Woman" and "The Awakening of Helena Richie." The title is taken from the Biblical quotation from the Song of Solomon: "Love is as strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave; the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame."

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William Rose Benet, whose novel "The First Person Singular" is reviewed elsewhere in this section, comes of an army family, his grandfather having been Brig.-Gen. Stephen Vincent Benet. He was born at Fort Hamilton, New York. He took his degree from Yale and lived for three years in San Francisco before he took up literary work in New York. Among Mr. Benet's books of poetry are "Moons of Grandeur," "Merchants From Cathay," "The Great White Wall," &c.

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Walt Whitman's "Salut au Monde," which the Neighborhood Playhouse has been giving, is a festival visualizing the people of the world and the manifestations of the divine message through their religious rituals with an authentic understanding of the poet's magnificent word pageant. It is also another instance of the inspiration which musicians find in Whitman's works. The musical setting was the work of Charles T. Griffes, the young American composer, who died recently. This was his last composition and his epitaph.

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The voters of Vermland, Selma Lagerlof's home, have again asked Dr. Lagerlof to become a candidate for the Swedish Parliament. Although she is a suffragist Miss Lagerlof has declined because her entire time will be needed to complete the literary work which she has planned. She does not write rapidly and wishes to be unhurried in her work. Her new novel, "The Outcast," reviewed in this section March 12, was several years in preparation. Writing and the managing of her estate, Dr. Lagerlof feels, would leave very little time for political work. There are now several women members of the Riksdag, but Miss Lagerlof does not attribute their election entirely to the feminist agitation in Sweden.

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Marjorie L. C. Pickthall died at Vancouver April 7 in the General Hospital, after an operation from which she had seemed to be convalescent. Miss Pickthall was the author of two books of poetry, a poetic drama and two novels, the latest, "The Bridge," published by the Century Company. This story is based upon the refusal of an engineer who has scamped the safety margin of a bridge with disastrous results to accept moral responsibility.

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The Century Company announces for publication May 26 the following: "The Great Secret," by Maurice Maeterlinck; "The Laurentians: The Hills of the Habitant," by T. Morris Longstreth; "Our Railroads To-morrow," by Edward Hungerford; "The Love Story of Aliette Brunton," by Gilbert Frankau; "Plots and Personalities," by Edwin E. Slosson and June E. Downey; "The Building of an Army," by John Dickinson; "At the Moment of Death," by Camille Flammarion; "The Complete Radio Book," by Raymond Francis Yates and L. G. Pacent, and "Food Products From Afar," by E. H. S. Bailey and H. S. Bailey.

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"If," the new play by Lord Dunsany, which Putnams have just published in book form, will be produced on the New York stage this autumn under the management of Brock Pemberton. The play already has had a run in London.

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The "Mark Twain burglar's" story of his own life is a volume entitled "In the Clutch of Circumstances," just published by D. Appleton & Co. This noted criminal, whose second long prison term followed his famous attempted robbery of Mark Twain's Connecticut home, has here told the story of the varied criminal undertakings in which he took part, together with the punishments received on their account. The book gives a picture of the old type of prison and of the effect of the modern spirit of the "helping hand" to criminals. This man is now a useful and productive member of society.

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During one of his New York lectures Sir Conan Doyle recommended to his audience a book published in 1920 by Stokes. This book, "Revelations of Louise," is the record of a series of remarkable communications with a young girl in the spirit world, as reported by Albert S. Crockett, a veteran journalist, who tells only what he himself witnessed and took part in.